Amendments to the Claims

Please amend the claims as follows. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method for sterilizing and producing a fish-paste product by utilizing gas-containing microbubbles having a diameter of 50 μm or less, comprising the steps of:

adding the ozone gas-containing microbubbles generated in water to raw materials of the fish-paste product;

pestling the raw materials after the step of adding the ozone gas-containing microbubbles;

coating interfaces of the ozone gas-containing microbubbles with protein and lipid in the raw materials during the step of pestling thereby creating coating shells composed of said protein and lipid to maintain the ozone gas-containing microbubbles for 2 to 50 hours;

giving a first stimulation to a part of the ozone gas-containing microbubbles thereby rupturing the coating shells of the ozone gas-containing microbubbles while said ozone gas-containing microbubbles are in the raw materials, thereby sterilizing the ~~fish-paste product~~ raw materials by the formation of active oxygen and free radical species;

giving a second stimulation to another part of the ozone gas-containing microbubbles while processing and packaging the fish-paste product, thereby further sterilizing the fish-paste product by the further formation of active oxygen and free radical species; and

wherein the further formation of active oxygen and free radical species kill germs contaminated to the raw materials in the producing process of the fish-paste product, and wherein the fish-paste product is germ-free and has an effect of being sterilized ~~in a state of final product~~.

2. (canceled)

3. (original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the step of adding the ozone gas-containing microbubbles to raw materials of the fish-paste product comprises adding water containing the ozone gas-containing microbubbles.

4. (canceled)

5. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the step of adding the ozone gas-containing microbubbles to raw materials of the fish-paste product comprises spraying a mist of water containing the ozone gas-containing microbubbles.

6. to 8. (canceled)

9. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the first stimulation comprises rubbing together the raw materials containing the ozone gas-containing microbubbles ~~tentatively stabilized by the coating shells at~~ during the step of pestling of the raw materials.

10. (canceled)

11. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the second stimulation comprises high-frequency irradiation of ~~raw materials containing the ozone gas-containing microbubbles tentatively stabilized by the coating shells~~ the fish-paste product.

12. (canceled)

13. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the second stimulation comprises microwave irradiation of ~~raw materials containing the ozone gas-containing microbubbles tentatively stabilized by the coating shells~~ the fish paste product.

14. (canceled)

15. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the ~~second~~ first stimulation comprises heating the raw materials containing the ozone gas-containing microbubbles ~~tentatively stabilized by the coating shells~~.

16. to 19. (canceled)

20. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the pestling is continued for 20 minutes during which the relative speed of a pestle to a mortar is kept at 15 cm/s.

21. (new) A method for producing a fish-paste product, comprising the steps of:

adding ozone gas-containing microbubbles generated in water to raw materials of the fish-paste product;

coating interfaces of the ozone gas-containing microbubbles with protein and lipid in the raw materials, thereby creating coating shells composed of said protein and lipid;

rupturing the coating shells of a portion of the ozone gas-containing microbubbles in the raw materials to form active oxygen and free radical species, thereby sterilizing the raw materials; and

rupturing the coating shells of another portion of the ozone gas-containing microbubbles after processing and packaging the fish-paste product to form further active oxygen and free radical species, thereby sterilizing the fish-paste product.

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